

## **HELMETS TO HARDHATS UPDATE**

**June 1, 2005**



### **Helmets to Hardhats Begins Third Year with Great Success**

It seems like everywhere we look, tributes are being made to the men and women who have served our country. We saw it at the super bowl, we see it in the daily news and we see it on the wrists of people that pass us by on the street. Thousands of our troops are still fighting in Iraq and others have returned home to take the next step in their civilian lives and careers.

Helmets to Hardhats is a national program that was started in 2002 that connects National Guard, Reserve and transitioning active-duty military members with quality career training and employment opportunities within the construction industry. The program is administered by the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment, and Veterans Employment and headquartered in Carlsbad, Calif. Direction for management of the center comes from a board of trustees comprised of equal numbers of employer and labor trustees.

The program has experienced tremendous success in a short amount of time as evidenced in our metrics, success stories and positive public relations. Through the proactive support and registrations of the building and construction trade unions, quality employers and JATCs, we now have over 45,000 careers listed on our website and have referred 21,161 candidates into careers.

Everyday calls, letters and emails pour into the Helmets to Hardhats headquarters from candidates that have been placed in a career through the program with their thanks and appreciation for what has been done for them. There is unbelievable emotion in the things that they tell us.

Here is what one candidate had to say.

"My name is Kurt Stumpf and I wanted to thank you for this wonderful program for veterans. I am a bricklayer from Indianapolis, local 4 and I have been deployed recently to fight in the war. I have been able to utilize the training that I received in the union. My primary job here is masonry and I have been able to help train and work next to the local people here. The members in my unit respect the knowledge I have learned in the union and have shown a desire to join a union when they return home. I am so proud of you guys for giving my brothers in uniform a chance to better their lives. I've shed a tear for that and thank you for this grand opportunity you have given to all veterans. I've never felt more proud about being a union worker than I do now."

## **Direct Entry**

One of the major milestones achieved in 2004 with the program was the beginning of statewide direct entry signings. With the help of the Indiana BCTC, all of their affiliates, and the Governor, we were able to create a direct entry process to help our candidates get accepted quicker and easier into all of the Indiana trades. Ohio soon followed with a similar direct entry-signing event.

This year Connecticut, West Virginia, Washington and Rhode Island have also had direct entry signing events. The direct entry signings provide a common agreement between the BCTCs, the affiliates, JATCs, governmental authorities and Helmets to Hardhats leaders to support all Helmets to Hardhats candidates within each state.

With the implementation of a statewide direct entry program, Helmets to Hardhats candidates are able to get into quality construction careers soon after applying for them through Helmets to Hardhats. Once the state proclamation is signed, it allows all JATCs and locals (at their discretion) to accept current and former military candidates and provide credit for military training and experience.

Various public media entities approached Helmets to Hardhats on several occasions wanting to hear the “good news” story. Helmets to Hardhats was featured on CNN, ENR Magazine, Public Radio News, On Guard Magazine, CBS, NBC, ABC and many other military publications. Also the program was asked to be game day sponsors for the Seattle Seahawks and Baltimore Orioles professional sports teams. In addition to those mentions, the Department of Labor put together a documentary that highlighted Helmets to Hardhats calling it the best example of a transition program for our veterans.

Helmets to Hardhats is also working in conjunction with the Outdoor Living Network to produce 30 second and 90 second commercials.

Our “Good News” campaign for 2005 is all about proactively sharing our successes. We want the world to know what the Building and Construction Trade members and employers have done for our troops. In order to support those efforts, we will soon release an online media center that will allow the public to view our success stories, photos and voices of candidates that have been placed with a simple click of a button.

Sharing our successes will help to bring in many more supporters of the program that will allow it to continue to grow and prosper. During this time of war, there is no better news to share.

For more information please call (866) 741-6210 or email [sarah@helmetstohardhats.org](mailto:sarah@helmetstohardhats.org)

## **National Guard Chief Praises H2H**

Helmets to Hardhats began 2005 with its annual progress report to the Board of Governor's at the BCTD annual conference in Orlando in January. The attendees were joined by Lieutenant General H Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, who thanked them for forging an affiliation with the military and the construction industry.

"You are opening doors for people that would otherwise not be able to open them," Blum said. "No other industry in the history of the United States has ever made a total commitment to support the armed forces by providing access to the best jobs in construction," he added.

Helmets to Hardhats also brings together two factions that have built this country, he pointed out.

"Together, the military and the construction trades have built America over the past several hundred years with the same kind of sweat, equity, commitment and courage," he said.

**NAME: Kristina Reinholtz**

**Status: U.S. Army to Carpenter Apprentice, Local 1977  
Las Vegas, Nevada**

I was brought up in a family where it was a tradition to serve our country and I wanted to carry on that tradition. I decided to join the United States Army to show my appreciation for my country and my freedom. Unfortunately during my time in, I had an accident with me knee and had to leave but I spent enough time in to learn the importance of discipline and leadership.

When I was getting ready to leave, I knew that I had to find another career that I could count on. I did not want a dead end job. I needed a career that would enable me to support my family.

I knew that I liked working with my hands and wanted to find a career that could utilize my skills in that area. I searched online for jobs and ran across the Helmets to Hardhats program. I looked on their website and applied for a carpentry job. I thought it might be something I would like to do.

Once I registered and applied, I got a call from a Helmets to Hardhats customer service representative. First he thanked me for serving our country and then he provided me with some additional guidance about my application.

Like many other people transitioning from the military, I was willing to move to start a new career. I let the customer support rep know that I lived in Utah but would move my family if there was a good opportunity in another area. He then searched the database and told me that UBC local 1977 had immediate availability.

I was soon accepted, moved my family out to Las Vegas and I am now an apprentice. My military skills proved to be very effective in my new career. The military challenges you, as do the unions. I like the challenge and strive to be a success. I appreciate that I had the opportunity to get into not just a job, but a great career.



**NAME: Anthony Bonarrigo**

**TRANSITION: U.S. Navy to BAC Local 5  
Middleburg, Ohio**

When preparing to leave the Navy, my main concern was finding a job that would allow me to support my family. I liked the idea of creating a design, constructing it with my own hands and then being able to see the finished product. I decided to look into the Bricklayers Union in my area.

I visited Mr. Dvorak from Bricklayers Local 5 and he told me about Helmets to Hardhats when he found out I was from the military. He was very excited and said that he wanted to take in one Helmets to Hardhats candidate per year and I'd be the first one. I registered with the program and he immediately accepted me into his local and I am now working for Crest.

The military helped me so much for this job and life. Just the presentation of oneself that the military teaches, the clean look, the way of speaking and how to show respect are all very valuable. My higher ups at the job site also like the fact that I show up on time.

After serving in the military, I wanted to be part of something else that I could be proud of. My union membership has allowed me to do that. Even though I had a tough childhood, I was smart enough to make the right decisions at critical times in my life to get me where I am today. I thank the military and my union for providing me with positive opportunities and the chance to have a second family.

